

Message Text

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SUBJ: AMERICAN ASTRONAUT CAPTAIN EUGENE CERNAN VISIT TO
BELGRADE, LJUBLJANA, CELJE

BEGIN SUMMARY: AMERICAN ASTRONAUT CAPTAIN EUGENCE CERNAN HAD UNUSUALLY SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA FROM SEPT. 23-26. IN WHIRLWIND TOUR HE CALLED ON YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN BELGRADE, LJUBLJANA AND CELJE AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF YUGOSLAVIA'S ASTRONAUTICAL AND ROCKET SOCIETIES. CERNAN ALSO SPOKE AT OPENING OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR IN BELGRADE AND "EYEWITNESS TO SPACE" EXHIBIT IN LJUBLJANA. END SUMMARY.

BELGRADE (SEPT. 25)

1. CAPTAIN CERNAN AND AMBASSADOR TOON FIRST CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER DZEMAL BIJEDIC AT FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WHERE THEY SPENT 45 MINUTES--15 MORE THAN ANTICIPATED. BIJEDIC VERY INTERESTED IN AMERICAN SPACE PROGRAM AND SPECIFICALLY CERNAN TRIP TO MOON. BIJEDIC ASKED USUAL QUESTIONS--HOW DID YOU FEEL? COLOR OF SOIL? WHAT DID EARTH LOOK LIKE FROM OUTER SPACE? BIJEDIC, WHO HAS TWO SONS INTERESTED IN SPACE, WONDERED WHY MORE SPACE FILMS WERE NOT SHOWN ON YUGOSLAV TV. AMBASSADOR TOON STATED FILMS WERE AVAILABLE AND HE DELIGHTED TO INVITE PRIME MINISTER FOR SCREENING. CERNAN VERY ARTICULATE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH BIJEDIC AND DURING OTHER CALLS. (SHORTLY AFTER INTRODUCTIONS CERNAN NOTED HE WAS FREQUENTLY ASKED IF UNCLASSIFIED

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HE "HAD SEEN GOD IN OUTER SPACE." CERNAN FIELDDED QUESTION ASTUTELY

BY STATING THAT HE HAD NOT, "BUT WHEN ONE CONSIDERS BEAUTY OF EARTH," MAGNIFICENT COLORS, SWIRLS OF CLOUDS, MOUNTAINS, OCEANS, PLAINS, DESERTS, IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE ALL CREATED WITHOUT SUPERHUMAN PARTICIPATION. BIJEDIC COUNTERED, "I WOULD NOT KNOW, I'VE NEVER BEEN IN OUTER SPACE." PRIME MINISTER DISAPPOINTED CERNAN AND AMBASSADOR COULD NOT STAY LONGER FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS. CERNAN PROMISED TO RETURN. BIJEDIC WAS PRESENTED WITH MINIATURE YUGOSLAV FLAG. CARRIED TO MOON BY APOLLO 17.

2. AMBASSADOR TOON AND CAPTAIN CERNAN NEXT TOOK PART IN OPENING TELECOMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR. BEFORE INTRODUCING AMERICAN ASTRONAUT, AMBASSADOR TOON POINTED OUT GROWING PROGRESS IN BUSINESS RELATIONS BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND U.S. HE SINGLED OUT RECENT NUCLEAR POWER PLANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND WESTINGHOUSE AT KRSKO. HE NOTED INCREASE IN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AND EMPHASIZED ESTABLISHMENT OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE IN BELGRADE AND NEW YORK. AMBASSADOR TOON DECLARED "TELECOMMUNICATIONS ESSENTIAL IN TODAY'S WORLD FOR RAPID EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING." CAPTAIN CERNAN NOTED GREAT IMPACT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS ON WORLD AND SPACE MISSION IN PARTICULAR. "TELECOMMUNICATIONS KEPT US IN TOUCH WITH GROUND SUPPORT PEOPLE AND FORMED DATA NEEDED FOR PEACE OF MIND AND SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF MISSIONS. CERNAN EMPHASIZED NEED FOR COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE OF EARTH FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION.

3. APOLLO 17 COMMANDER AND AMBASSADOR TOON THEN CALLED ON ENGINEER BRANISLAV IKONIC, VICE PRESIDENT OF SERBIAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. IKONIC RECEIVED THEM WARMLY. IKONIC SAID VISIT OF CERNAN AND OTHER AMERICAN ASTRONAUTS ALWAYS WELCOME IN YUGOSLAVIA. HOWEVER, HE AND BIJEDIC BOTH COMPLAINED OF SHORT TIME CERNAN WOULD BE IN BELGRADE.

4. AMBASSADOR TOON THEN ESCORTED CAPTAIN CERNAN TO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL WHERE SOME 200 CHILDREN REPRESENTING 27 NATIONS PUMMELED ASTRONAUT WITH QUESTIONS RANGING FROM "HOW DID YOU SCRUB FLOOR OF SPACE CRAFT?" TO "WHAT IS 'G' LEVEL ON MOON?"

5. AFTER SHORT LUNCH, CERNAN TAKEN TO BELGRADE TV STATION AND INTERVIEWED BY SPACE EXPERT MILIVOJ JUGIN.
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6. IN RECORD-BREAKING RACE TO AIRPORT, USIS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF 20-MINUTE RIDE FOR VOA INTERVIEW. GENERALLY MEDIA COVERAGE GOOD, APPEARED ON TV THREE TIMES DURING DAY, FRONT PAGE OF POLITIKA EXPRESS, INSIDE PAGES OF BORBA, POLITIKA, VJESNIK OF ZAGREB, AND DNEVNIK OF NOVI SAD. SLOVENIA (SEPT. 23-24)

CERNAN'S VISIT TO LJUBLJANA ESPECIALLY APPRECIATED SINCE GOOD PUBLICITY FOR "EYEWITNESS TO SPACE" EXHIBIT. MARKED INCREASE IN ATTENDANCE NOTED.

1. CERNAN OPENED SLOVENIA TOUR WITH PRESS CONFERENCE AT LEV HOTEL SEPT.

23. QUESTIONS COVERED USUAL CURIOSITY ABOUT "SPACE PEOPLE" IN ADDITION TO THOSE ON SPACE SHUTTLE, RELATIONSHIPS WITH SOVIET ASTRONAUTS, WHETHER MAN WOULD REACH MARS "IN OUR LIFETIME," ETC. CERNAN EMPHASIZED AMERICAN SPACE PROGRAM "FOR ALL MANKIND" AND NOT JUST ASTRONAUTS.

2. FOLLOWING DAY CERNAN ACCOMPANIED BY USIC DIRECTOR CHRISTOPHER HENZE CALLED ON DR. AUGUSTING LAH, VICE PRESIDENT OF SLOVENIAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. THE AMERICAN ASTRONAUT SPOKE OF COMMON TIES OF HUMANITY AND NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING. CERNAN PRESENTED APPROPRIATE PHOTOS AND OTHER MEMENTOES TO ALL DIGNITARIES DURING CALLS.

3. BOTH HE AND HENZE CALLED ON MAYOR OF LJUBLJANA ENG. TONE KOVIC. KOVIC PRESENTED CERNAN WITH MEDALION, SYMBOL OF CITY. QUESTIONS OF MAYOR WERE GENERAL CONCERNING HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT OF MOON, GRAVITY, ETC.

4. FROM LJUBLJANA CERNAN DRIVEN TO CELJE (APPROX. 50 MILES FROM LJUBLJANA) WHICH HAS ACTIVE YOUNG ROCKET SOCIETY. CERNAN ALSO RECEIVED BY VICE MAYOR ASIC WHO EXPRESSED PLEASURE IN VISIT.

5. IN CELJE CERNAN TAKEN TO FAMOUS GOLD FACTORY AND MET BY DIRECTOR. INTERESTING DISCUSSIONS HELD ON USE OF GOLD AND OTHER PRECIOUS METALS IN SPACE PROGRAM. AT LUNCH APOLLO 17 COMMANDER HELD LIVELY DISCUSSION UNCLASSIFIED

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6. WITH MEMBERS OF SLOVENIAN ASTRONAUTICAL AND ROCKET SOCIETY. GIVE-AND-TAKE TECHNICAL IN NATURE. HOWEVER CERNAN MADE POINT OF EMPHASIZING NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN SPACE PROGRAM AND PRAISED WORK OF ALL ROCKET CLUBS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS.

6. ON RETURN TO LJUBLJANA, CAPTAIN CERNAN VISITED USIS'S "EYEWITNESS TO SPACE" EXHIBIT AND MADE SPEECH ON FUTURE OF SPACE PROGRAM. THIS TALK ACCOMPANIED BY FILM CLIPS FOLLOWED BY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. CERNAN PRESENTED REPLICA OF PLAQUE WHICH TRAVELLED TO MOON ON LUNAR MODULE TO DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL MUSEUM MARJAN VIDNAR. LEFT FOR BELGRADE BY TRAIN SEPT. 24 AT 22:14.

7. COMMENT

EMBASSY CONSIDERS SENDING OF ASTRONAUTS TO YUGOSLAVIA EXCELLENT IDEA
SINCE PROVIDES EXPOSURE OF AMERICANS AS HUMANISTIC INDIVIDUALS WHOSE
UNSELFISH EXPLOITS UNDER VERY DANGEROUS CONDITIONS MEANT FOR ALL MAN-
KIND. CAPTAIN CERNAN VERY CAPABLE, AMIABLE, IN FACT, OUTSTANDING, IN
PRESENTING U.S. SPACE STORY TO WORLD. HE EMPHASIZED DESIRE TO RETURN
TO YUGOSLAVIA WHEN MORE TIME WOULD PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITY TO TAL
K
AT LENGTH ABOUT U.S. SPACE PROGRAM, NOT ONLY WITH TECHNICIANS AND
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BUT YOUNGER SCHOOL CHILDREN AND STUDENTS WHO WILL

LEAD FUTURE TRAVEL AND ENJOY THE ACCOMPANYING SPIN-OFFS.

8. IT IS UNFORTUNATE CERNAN COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PROGRAMMED FOR
LONGER STAY IN YUGOSLAVIA. HE PROVED TO BE UNIQUELY CAPABLE IN
ADVANCING IMPORTANT US INTERESTS HERE. YUGOSLAVS, OF COURSE, WERE
AWARE OF HIS MUCH LONGER SOJOURNS ELSEWHERE IN EASTERN
EUROPE AND WERE SOMEWHAT MIFFED.
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